



# The Joy and Heartache of Organic Farming

Kitty Colchester of Drumeen farm had a year of highs and lows in 2009. Within 3 months of launching Drumeen Farm's Happy Heart Oil, she had won four major awards from Bord Bia, Euro-toque, JFC and Bridgestone. "The support we received was phenomenal," she says, "and the demand for an Irish culinary oil far exceeded our expectations."

However, a fire on the farm and the -9c soil temperatures over the winter destroyed both her crops, meaning production of the oil has been delayed until September 2010. "I was encouraged to buy in seed from Europe but decided against it as I want the product to be 100% traceable from field to plate, I want it to be fresh, and most of all, I want it to be Irish."

Kitty spent years living in cities and working in sales before she started producing cooking oil. After spending time doing aid work in Africa, she decided that she wanted to work with food and from the land, and to sell something she actually believed in.

"We don't really know what we are eating nowadays. There is growing evidence that the chemicals and synthetic fertilisers used to produce our food are linked to heart disease, infertility and cancer. Most of our food is flown in from all over the world, so the nutritional value has depreciated in supermarket store rooms and airports not to mention the air miles it clocks up unnecessarily, and the jobs it would create here if we stopped importing so much of our food. Food in Ireland is taken for granted. Little interest is shown in where and how it is produced and that lack of interest is having a big effect on our health, on the health and welfare of our animals, on the soil and on our eco system."

So, what are the benefits to organic oils? "When we cook with non-organic oil, we are actually eating the chemical residues used to grow the plant. Also, with non-organic oils, hexane solvents are used when pressing the seed in order to get more oil from the seed and therefore more profit. With organic oil production you don't get any of these chemicals in your food."

The rapeseed is grown, harvested, dried, cold pressed, filtered and bottled on the oldest existing organic farm in Ireland. Kitty presses the oil weekly, which means that it is the freshest cooking oil available in Ireland. It therefore retains a higher percentage of Omega 3 and 6 and has more cholesterol-reducing fatty acids than olive oil and sunflower oil flown in from abroad. Unlike a lot of oil producers, she cold presses the seeds instead of using high temperatures which in fact deplete the excellent source of vitamins and Omegas in the oil.

For more information about Kitty Colchester's Drumeen Farm Rapeseed Oil call 087 9265423 or email [drumeenfarm@gmail.com](mailto:drumeenfarm@gmail.com).



**Award Winning** - Drumeen Farm won four major awards within 3 months of launching.